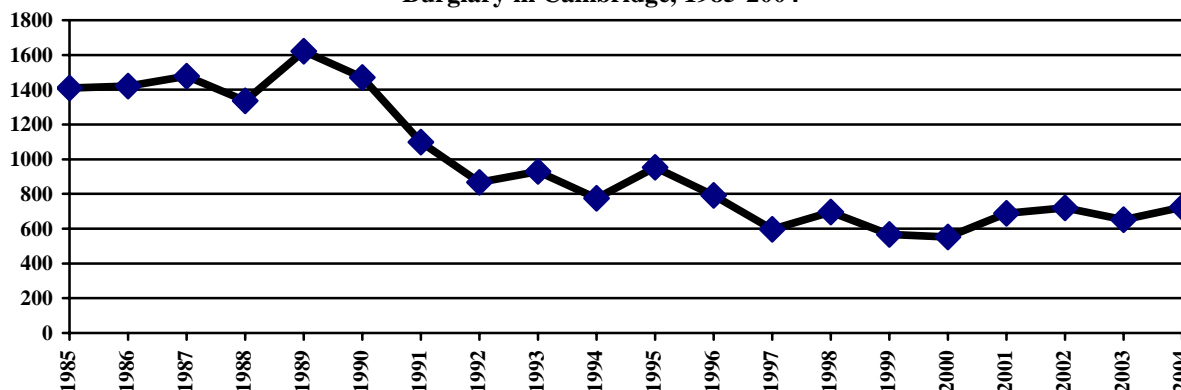


# BURGLARY

describes the unlawful entry of a structure to commit a felony or theft. The use of force to gain entry is not required to classify an offense as burglary. Burglary attempts are included in the total.

**Twenty Year Review:  
Burglary in Cambridge, 1985-2004**



**651 reported in 2003 • 724 reported in 2004**

Over the past twenty years, burglary in Cambridge has decreased by approximately 47%. Burglary crimes peaked in the late 1980's and dramatically decreased, beginning in the early 1990's. Since that decade, burglary has been on an overall incline. In 2004 Cambridge experienced the highest rate of burglary since 1996. Over the past five years an average of 667 burglaries have been reported.

Burglary is categorized as a more serious crime than larceny since it involves the use of force and unlawful entry to a business or residence. Perpetrators employ various techniques to enter residences or businesses. Because burglars need to pull off their heist quickly, break-ins are occasionally

only unsuccessful "attempts," in which no entry is made, but damage is caused to the structure.

Burglars often fall into two types: the "amateur" burglars and the "professional" burglars. Amateurs

are likely to smash windows or kick in doors to enter unoccupied buildings. These burglars will often take light, visible

property, like a purse left on a table, jars of change and other less costly items. "Professional" burglars, alternatively, are more sophisticated in their methods. They often pry open a door, disable alarms and even enter occupied establishments and tend to steal higher-priced items.

For the purposes of analysis, burglary is divided into two main categories: *commercial* and *residential*.

	2003	2004	% Change
Commercial Burglary	134	139	+4%
Residential Burglary	517	585	+13%
Total	651	724	+11%

**Protect your home or business!! Please see page 139 for tips on how you can protect against becoming a victim of a commercial or residential burglary, and what do if a break occurs.**

# COMMERCIAL BURGLARY

A commercial burglary, more commonly referred to as a *commercial break*, is an unlawful entry into a commercial establishment, including business, government, religious or retail establishments. Between 2003 and 2004 there was a 4% increase in commercial breaks in Cambridge. Over the past five years commercial breaks have averaged approximately 154 incidents a year, a 26% decrease from the previous five-year average.

A wide variety of establishment types are targeted for commercial burglary using an array of methods. Most breaks fall into one of the following categories:

**Smash & Grab** burglaries target display windows along major routes. The burglar runs or drives up, smashes the window, steals valuables from the immediate area of the window, and runs off. The entire endeavor may take less than a minute.

**Retail** burglars pry or smash their way into stores, and other locations with cash registers on the premises. They are hoping for cash left in the register or the safe and may grab some cigarettes or a stack of lottery tickets on the way out.

**Restaurant/Bar** burglars often cross multiple jurisdictions, breaking into similar franchises, looking for safes. Safes and registers were targeted in a majority of the cases in 2004.

**Business** burglars enter real estate offices, law firms, technology companies, and other offices, looking for laptop computers and other expensive equipment. The majority of these incidents were repeat locations in which an intruder gained entrance into locked offices and stole computer equipment.

**Construction Site** thieves are a special breed of burglars who know how to select, steal, and sell expensive power tools, building supplies, and heavy equipment. They are often in the business themselves, and may have done some sub-contract work on the site that they target. Of the five 2004 incidents, the three at the end of the year appeared to have been related.

**Safe Crackers** are a more professional type of burglar in the City. In these instances, the perpetrators are entering businesses with high cash

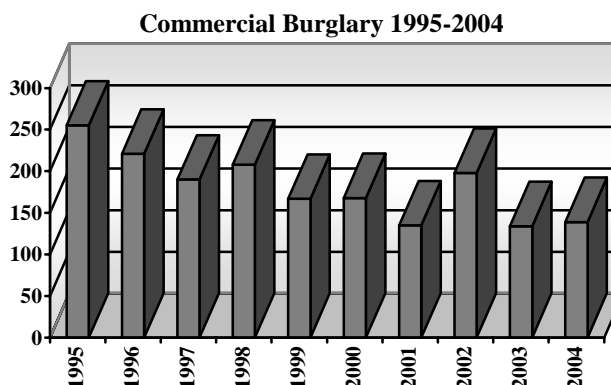
TYPE OF PREMISE	2003	2004
Business Offices	24	41
Bar/Restaurant	23	24
Retail Establishments	9	24
School	5	8
Convenience Store	4	7
Industrial/Construction	3	5
Church	6	3
Laundromat/Cleaners	5	3
Other: includes miscellaneous establishments.	55	24
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>139</b>

intake, such as restaurants and bars, and take cash in most instances.

**Church** burglars are usually homeless individuals with substance abuse problems. They enter lightly secured houses of worship, looking for petty cash and easily fenced items. One of the 2004 incidents involved cash stolen from a collection box, and another the involved the theft of digital cameras.

**School** burglars are generally juveniles, breaking into their own schools to vandalize or to steal computers and other expensive goods they see every day. These incidents commonly occurred mid-week and on the weekends.

TOP FIVE TARGETED PROPERTIES IN 2004
Cash
Laptop/Computer
Lottery
Cigarettes
Tools



## GEOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF COMMERCIAL BURGLARIES

Business District	2002	2003	2004	% Change 03-04	% of Total
Central Square	57	18	49	+172%	35%
Harvard Square	28	22	20	-9%	14%
Alewife/West Cambridge	24	18	16	-11%	12%
Inman Square/Harrington	21	21	13	-38%	9%
Kendall Square/M.I.T.	10	10	11	+10%	8%
Massachusetts Avenue 1500-1900	6	3	10	+233%	7%
East Cambridge/Galleria	26	10	8	-20%	6%
Porter Square/North Cambridge	15	13	6	-54%	4%
Bay Square/Upper Broadway	8	15	4	-73%	3%
Cambridgeport/Riverside	3	4	2	-50%	1%

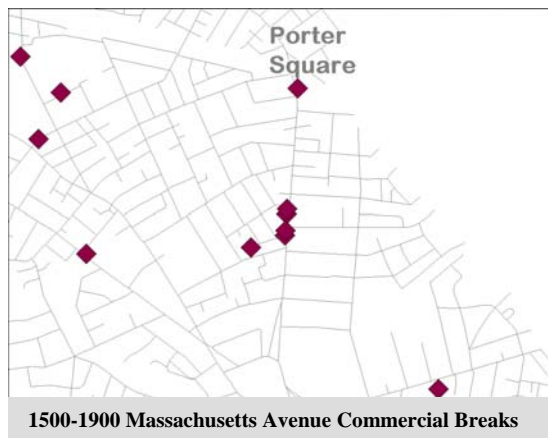
While Harvard Square and Inman Square/Harrington together incurred nearly half of all commercial breaks in 2003, in 2004 Central Square alone experienced over a third of commercial breaks. The notable increase in breaks in Central Square can be attributed to a series that arose and came to a stop late in the fall.

Harvard Square, similar in business density to Central Square, saw a minor decrease in incidents, as commercial break activity in the district has been on the slow decline in the past three years.



Central Square, one of the busiest commercial areas in the city, experienced a drastic increase of 172% in commercial breaks, as a series of related incidents were reported from October to November 2004 on Massachusetts Avenue.

**Central Square** experienced a significant increase between 2003 and 2004 due to the fact that the 2003 incidents indicated a 40-year record low and a series of incidents plagued the area during the fall for over a month period. The series of breaks during this time involved weekend nighttime breaks into a variety of establishments within the 500-600 Massachusetts Avenue block. Generally cash was the targeted property in those breaks, although lottery tickets, stamps and laptops were stolen in select incidents. While there were no other serious patterns, breaks in this district were highly concentrated in the 500-600 Massachusetts Avenue block, and took place mostly overnight. Restaurant/Bars were the most targeted establishments in Central Square.



The extraordinary 233% increase in commercial breaks in the **Massachusetts Avenue 1500-1900** district is explained by the low incidence of breaks in 2003. Temporally, the breaks were reported evenly throughout the year. Of the ten reported incidents, two were unsuccessful attempts that indicated no sign of entry to the establishment. Seven incidents were reported on average over the past five years.

Commercial burglaries in **Kendall Square /MIT** have remained stable over the past five years. Establishments targeted in this area are typically technology firms and involve the theft of laptops, a trend visible in larceny from building in this area as well.

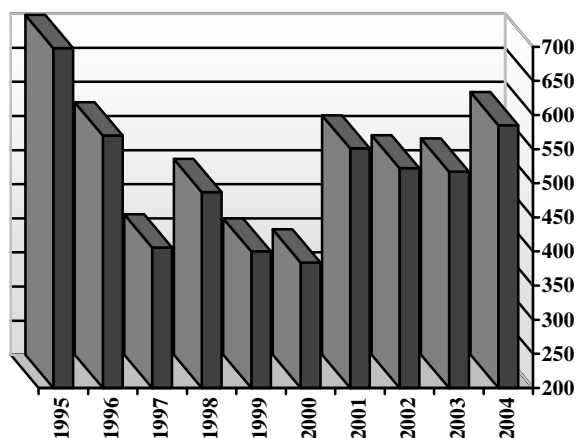
**Bay Square/Upper Broadway** experienced the greatest decrease, with only four reported incidents in 2004. The five-year average in this area is 10 incidents a year, further highlighting the significantly low 2004 total. Two of the reported incidents took place on the same date at adjoining locations. Two of the incidents were also at construction sites, but there is no indication of a relationship.

## RESIDENTIAL BURGLARY

Residential burglaries, or “housebreaks,” are of particular concern to local police and communities because of the loss of personal security felt when one’s home is invaded and possessions are stolen. There were 585 housebreaks reported in Cambridge in 2004, a 13% increase from the previous year.

Housebreaks over the past ten years peaked in the mid-1990s and then dropped in the late 1990s and into 2000. However, since 2001, housebreaks have been on the rise overall, due to the comeback of the professional thief. Professional thieves were a problem during the 1980s, and were characterized by individuals or small groups who would commit 200 to 300 housebreaks per year, many in wealthy residential locations. Arrests were made of a couple of individuals who are believed to have been responsible for the majority of the housebreak patterns in the past in Mid-Cambridge, Peabody and North Cambridge.

Residential Burglary, 1995-2004



## GEOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF RESIDENTIAL BURGLARY

AREA	2002*	2003	2004	% Change 03-04	% of Total
Mid-Cambridge	86	114	89	-22%	15%
Area 4	49	41	70	+71%	12%
Cambridgeport	65	51	68	+33%	12%
Peabody	55	58	66	+14%	11%
Inman/Harrington	37	20	61	+205%	10%
North Cambridge	50	70	49	-30%	8%
Riverside	39	38	47	+24%	8%
West Cambridge	35	47	47	0%	8%
East Cambridge	40	35	38	+9%	6%
Agassiz	46	24	36	+50%	6%
Strawberry Hill	16	15	11	-27%	2%
M.I.T. Area	0	1	2	+100%	0%
Cambridge Highlands	3	3	1	-67%	0%

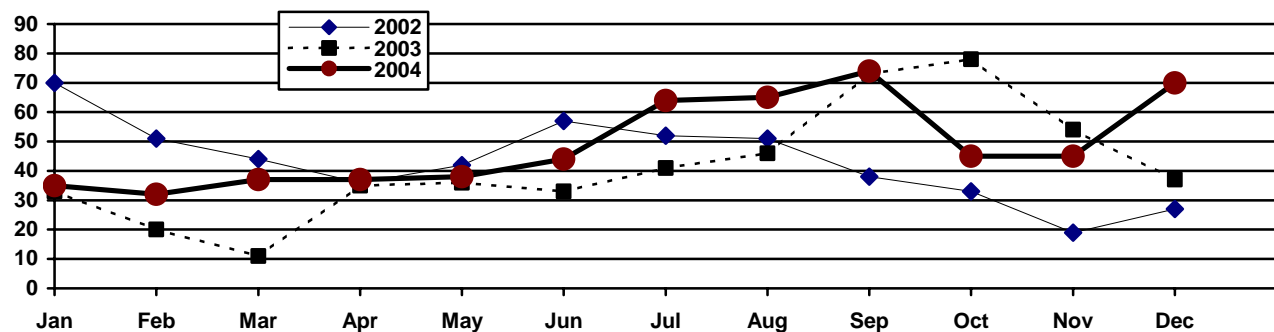
\* Please note that due to reclassification these numbers may differ slightly from those reported in the UCR.

Housebreaks in Cambridge are most often perpetrated by unknown suspects. However, in 2004, 8% were carried out by family, friends and other known individuals. This past year 15% of all reported housebreaks were unsuccessful attempts to enter the residence. Those incidents commonly resulted in damage to a door or window.

The most common method of entry is by forcing the front door, however, a large number of breaks take place during the summer months, in which entry is made by unlocked/open windows. The property targeted in housebreaks classically include cash and jewelry, but in a society where valuable electronics are owned by many, laptops, digital cameras and DVD players are now a common target of theft.

\*For detailed synopses of neighborhood housebreak activity and maps, please refer to the Neighborhood Section.

### 2002 – 2004 MONTHLY HOUSEBREAK TOTAL COMPARISON



#### TOP FIVE TARGETED PROPERTIES IN 2004

Jewelry
Laptops
Cash
Cameras
DVD Player

#### Housebreak Category Breakdown

Categorization	2004	% of Total
Professional	235	40%
Unprofessional	215	37%
Attempt	86	15%
Domestic	23	4%
Acquaintance	20	3%
Landlord	6	1%

## 2004 TIMELINE OF CAMBRIDGE HOUSEBREAK PATTERNS

